

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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Correction in United Church Statistics

In the November 1 edition the Activity News published the statistics from the United Church of Christ statistical report. There was an error in the figures as they should read: Total Offerings for April, 1956 to March, 1957 period amounted to ¥310,230,000. with total expenses for that period ¥278,769,000. For the period April, 1957 to March, 1958 the total offerings were ¥342,597,000. and the total expenses were ¥304,154,000.

We regret that we made this error and request that you change the figures on page 3 of your November 1 issue of this paper.

ICC Marks Tenth Anniversary of Declaration of Human Rights

The Executive Committee of the National Christian Council met during the past week and passed an official statement marking the tenth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.

The text of the statement is as follows:

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights had made a remarkable contribution throughout the world toward the championship and confirmation of the fundamental human rights including the freedoms of faith and speech. As Christians we heartily take delight in this declaration. At a time such as now, when political movements are likely to run in the direction of endangering the roots of democracy by disregard of the fundamental human rights, we cannot help realizing keenly and taking home to ourselves the graveness of the historical significance that this international declaration of human rights has. We hope, as we mark the tenth anniversary of this declaration, that Christians in this country will reaffirm the importance that this declaration has and endeavor to adhere to its fundamental principles."

Eight Protestant Missionaries Among 53 Honored

During the 9th International Conference of Social Work, on December 4, 1958 there was an award meeting for 53 missionaries who have devoted themselves more than 20 years to the care of the unfortunate people in Japan.

The meeting was held at the Sankei International Hall. Princess Takamatsu attended the ceremony in person. There were also more than 100 delegates from forty-some countries who shared the joy with the honored missionaries.

The meeting was opened by "Ave Maria" sung by Japanese girls. Mr. Ryugo Hashimoto, Minister of Health and Welfare, thanked the foreign workers on behalf of the Government for their services to the sick and needy and presented them with scrolls of appreciation. The Minister delivered the scrolls to each missionary. The Social Welfare Division of Asahi Press presented medals to these missionaries in appreciation of their great contribution to Japanese social welfare. The medals were in the shape of ancient mirrors rich in design.

The 53 persons honored were from France, 14; Germany, 9; Italy 8; Canada, 7; United States, 6; Spain, 4; England, 2; Austria, 2; Poland, 1. Among them 45 were Catholic priests and nuns and 8 (one man and seven women) were Protestant missionaries. The youngest was 44 years of age and the oldest was 85.

The work that these Protestant missionaries are doing now in Japan covers various fields such as day nurseries, infant homes, orphanages, dispensaries, old people's homes, work for crippled, blind and deaf, and other necessary relief work.

Prior to the ceremony these missionaries were invited to the Imperial Palace where they were received in audience by His Majesty

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the Emperor and Her Majesty the Empress. The Emperor and the Empress told them that they were happy to see them and thanked them for their lives of devoted service to the unfortunate Japanese and wished them good health for further service.

After the meeting they were invited to Korinkaku, ex-palace of Prince Takamatsu. There they were entertained with gay programs and high tea. Prince and Princess Takamatsu, ambassadors, and other distinguished officials enhanced the occasion.

The Protestants honored were Miss Thomasine Allen, Miss Gertrude Wecklich, Rev. H. V. Nicholson, Miss Mildred A. Paine, Miss Florence Penny, Miss Maud Powlas, Miss Annie Powlas and Miss Elizabeth Upton.

AVACO Prepares for Christmas

The two months prior to Christmas are filled with preparations at AVACO. This year, the following materials and activities have been planned or carried out.

On Christmas Eve a specially-planned candle-light worship service will be telecast by Radio Tokyo (KR-TV). The broadcast sponsored by several Christian businessmen will be directed by Mathew S. Ogawa, Executive Director of AVACO.

Also on Christmas Eve will be telecast THE NATIVITY STORY, a film of the American Bible Society, over Kyushu TV located in Fukuoka. The station has offered the time free for this broadcast. Japanese sound was added to the film by AVACO, in cooperation with Rev. Sunetaro Miyakoda, Director of the Japan Bible Society.

Radio Programs Highlight Christmas Meaning

In Japan great emphasis is put upon Christmas as a secular festival of gift exchange, decorations and parties, but little is known of the Christian significance. During December all of AVACO's radio programs are planned to present the central message of Christmas, the coming of God's Son, to the Japanese people. AVACO's three programs are directed to various segments of the population, SONGS OF THE HEART, sponsored broadcast of hymns and sermon, is directed to general listeners and reaches over a million persons every week. JAZZ MUSIC is directed to students, intellectuals and others who like Christian classical music. It includes short interpretative sermons. WOMEN'S TALK is aimed at housewives and includes drama, interviews, visits to Christian institutions, etc.

In addition, the new program, FRIEND OF THE HEART, produced by AVACO and sponsored by the United Church of Christ, has also presented Christmas emphasis during December.

Christmas Materials Prepared

AVACO production for Christmas centered on projected and non-projected materials.

A special puppet play, THE BELL WHICH DIDN'T RING, was produced and the script published in the AVACO magazine. Several dozen sets of the four puppets were produced. Thirty-five persons attended a special workshop to learn production of the scenery and operation of the puppets which they purchased, complete with costumes, for less than one dollar. The original puppet heads were carved from wood by Hiro Ueda, Japanese TV artist and puppeteer, who is a Christian layman. The technique of molding the heads, using sawdust and starch paste, was taught by Solomon Saprid, Director of the AV Committee of the Philippine Federation of Churches, on his recent visit to Japan.

AVACO also produced a filmstrip, THE NATIVITY, based on great works of art, a part of the filmstrip series called THE CHRIST IN ART SERIES. The script of this filmstrip has been recorded with musical background on tape.

A half a dozen new Christmas filmstrips have been imported and Japanese scripts prepared. Out of these, the AVACO Drama Group has recorded narration tapes with musical background and sound effects for the following: BETHLEHEM, THE BABY JESUS, THE HOLY NIGHT, and THE OTHER WISE MAN.

The December issue of the AVACO magazine carried a complete listing of Christmas materials available through the AVACO library. In addition, three insert cut out sheets provided the subscriber with a complete flannelgraph version of THE OTHER WISE MAN.

A lip synch magnetic soundtrack was recorded on the film, WHERE LOVE IS, GOD IS, a British version of the famous Tolstoy story. Lip synch means that Japanese actors took the various movements of the actors' lips on the screen so that they appear to be actually speaking Japanese rather than English. During December a lip synch version was also done of the Presbyterian stewardship film, SECOND CHANCE.

United Church Radio Program Launched

The first Sunday in December, the United Church of Christ in Japan made its first venture into the field of sponsored broadcasting, with the initiation of the program, FRIEND OF THE HEART over Radio Tokyo. This program will be sponsored by the United Church each Sunday morning at 6:30 for a test period of five months. Music, production expense and staff are provided by AVACO.

Progress in the Study of Group Life

Both the Tokyo and Kansai group members who participated in the Church and Group Life Laboratory, held this past summer as one of the programs in connection with the World Convention on Christian Education, have met for "reunions", the former in mid-November and the latter at the end of the month.

The purpose of the reunions was primarily to satisfy a desire to get together, to share reflections on the Laboratory experience after more than three months and consider what steps could be taken for following up the experience with further study and experiment.

Several interesting experiments have already been made by members of the Laboratory and the report of some of them was given at the November meetings. The consensus of those who gathered for the reunions was that a good deal more study and experience would be necessary before their understanding of the principles and practices of the Group Life Laboratory, and of healthy group life in the Church, could be such as to enable them to assume much leadership in this area. At the same time, it was recognized that the members of the first Laboratory have a responsibility to explain as effectively and as widely as possible this educational experience, to point out its contribution to the life of the Church, and to work consistently in the interest of study and promotion.

These several purposes were made clear and certain measures agreed upon to begin to carry them out. Among these will be the reparation of a group report on the Laboratory held this past summer; it will attempt to describe and interpret this experience for those who have not had it or who may as yet know little of the meaning of "group dynamics" and the growing discipline of "group development". Another measure will be the improvement of interchange of ideas and reports of continuing study-experiments, either by members or others interested in the field. And as an essential measure to further the program, contacts are being sought with those groups who are already fairly well advanced in it; notable among such groups is the National Group Dynamics Study Association, under the sponsorship of the Faculty of Education of Kyushu University. It is hoped to receive guidance in this way and also to cooperate with such groups in reparation and management of future laboratories.

The members who came together for both reunions felt they would like to see another Church and Group Life Laboratory held in Japan as soon as possible. The Church abroad is ready to assist in this by sending personnel who will be resource to a staff. But both the Church abroad and the Laboratory group here feel that much more work has to be done by the latter before serious planning for a second laboratory can be begun. A promising start on the necessary tasks has been made by the recent reunions.

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Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays there will be no issue of the Activity News on January 1. The next number will be January 15. The staff wishes you all a blessed holiday season.

